



Connecticut Department of Public Health

Testimony Presented Before the Human Services Committee

March 4, 2014

**Commissioner Jewel Mullen, MD, MPH, MPA
860-509-7101**

House Bill # 5322 - An Act Concerning Nursing Home Facility Minimum Staffing Levels

The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) offers the following information concerning House Bill 5322.

Nursing homes that participate in the Medicare and Medicaid programs are certified with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Annual certification is required for continued participation in these programs and certification inspections are conducted to assess a facility's compliance with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The Department of Public Health, in addition to its licensing authority, is contracted as the agent for CMS to conduct certification inspections within Connecticut.

Section 483.30(a) of the CFR directs that the facility must have sufficient nursing staff to provide nursing and related services to attain or maintain the highest practicable physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being of each resident, as determined by resident assessments and individual plans of care. Additionally, the nursing home must assure that sufficient qualified nursing staff is available on a daily basis to meet patients' needs for nursing care in a manner and in an environment which promotes each resident's physical, mental and psychosocial well-being, thus enhancing their quality of life.

During the course of licensure and certification inspection activities, staffing patterns are reviewed for compliance with Connecticut's public health code and the CFR. More importantly, observations are made and interviews with patients and families are conducted to ensure that adequate staffing is in place to meet the needs of the patients. Should non-compliance be identified, a deficiency is issued and the facility must respond with a plan of correction which directs the measures that shall be taken to remedy the issue.

This method of oversight and enforcement is more effective and patient-centered than numeric staffing ratios. California experimented with staffing ratios and then repealed them as such ratios proved to be cumbersome and ineffective in improving patient care.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

*Phone: (860) 509-7269, Fax: (860) 509-7100, Telephone Device for the Deaf (860) 509-7191
410 Capitol Avenue - MS # 13GRE, P.O. Box 340308 Hartford, CT 06134
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